

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00563 150914Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 DHA-02 PA-01 PRS-01
USIA-06 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /048 W
-----151012Z 087334 /22

R 150855Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5963
INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SF, PINT, US, PFOR
SUBJ: PERCY QOBOZA REQUESTS MEETING WITH
PRESIDENT CARTER

1. PERCY QOBOZA, EDITOR OF SOUTH AFRICA'S LARGEST BLACK
NEWSPAPER, THE WORLD, HAS REQUESTED A MEETING, AND, IF
POSSIBLE, INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT CARTER. QOBOZA WILL
BE IN WASHINGTON ON OTHER BUSINESS STARTING APRIL 30.

2. PERCY QOBOZA WAS AMONG GROUP OF RSA BLACK LEADERS
MEETING WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER DURING VISIT TO
PRETORIA AND IS EDITOR OF ONLY SOUTH AFRICAN DAILY NEWS-
PAPER AIMED AT BLACK READERS. SINCE RETURNING FROM USA
WHERE HE SPENT YEAR AS NIEMAN FELLOW FROM 1975-76,
QOBOZA HAS SPOKEN OUT FORTHRIGHTLY ON CONCERNS OF
BLACK PERSONS IN THIS COUNTRY. HE HAS GRADUALLY BEEN
CHANGING CONTENT OF NEWSPAPER THROUGH STRONGER
POLITICAL EDITORIALS AND MORE COMPLETE NEWS COVERAGE--
LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL. THIS MORE SERIOUS APPROACH
HAS STRUCK RESPONSIVE CHORD AMONG BLACKS, AS SHOWN BY
INCREASING CIRCULATION FIGURES (103,000 IN 1974,
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160,000 TODAY) WHICH MAKE "THE WORLD" THE SECOND LARGEST
CIRCULATION DAILY IN THE COUNTRY.

3. QOBOZA SEES HIMSELF AND HIS PAPER AS THE VOICE FOR
RSA'S URBAN BLACKS. HIS OUTSPOKENNESS HAS ATTRACTED
ATTENTION OF SECURITY POLICE WHO PICKED HIM UP FROM
HIS SOWETO HOME IN DECEMBER AND HELD HIM FOR EIGHT

HOURS OF QUESTIONING. THIS DETENTION CAUSED A SIGNED
PROTEST BY 17 EDITORS OF RSA NEWSPAPERS.

4. WE ARE NOT AWARE THAT PRESIDENT CARTER IS GRANTING
APPOINTMENTS TO FOREIGN NEWSMEN. NEVERTHELESS, WE ARE
BRINGING QOBOZA'S REQUEST TO THE DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION
IN CASE A BRIEF MEETING BETWEEN QOBOZA AND THE
PRESIDENT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED USEFUL AS IN THE CASE OF
CHIEF BUTHELEZI. SHOULD SUCH A MEETING NOT BE
ARRANGED, WE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT QOBOZA BE RECEIVED BY
WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY JODY POWELL AND, IF THE
VISIT SHOULD COINCIDE WITH A REGULAR PRESIDENTIAL NEW
CONFERENCE, THAT QOBOZA BE INVITED TO ATTEND. BOWDLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NEWSPAPERS, EDITORS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 15-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977CAPET00563
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770131-0487
Format: TEL
From: CAPE TOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770454/aaaabupl.tel
Line Count: 75
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7bf698a4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2798257
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PERCY QOBOZA REQUESTS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SF, US, (CARTER, JIMMY), (QOBOZA, PERCY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7bf698a4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009